

Cumulative Self-Talk (CST)

Post-Entry Worksheet — Beginner Edition

A short, steady pass you can use after each audio, video, or text entry.

Cumulative Self-Talk (CST) is a non-clinical, DIY, media-based way of talking to yourself over time.

You speak, write, or record in ordinary language, and gradually build a body of work that shows what is life-affirming, what needs attention, and how you actually live.

This worksheet is for beginners who are starting out with CST.

It helps you turn a fresh entry — audio, video, or text — into something you can use later, rather than leaving it as a one-off moment.

What this worksheet develops

By using this worksheet, you gradually build:

- **Body awareness**
Noticing tension, energy, and attention before you dive into meaning.
- **Summarising in plain language**
Turning messy entries into a few working sentences.
- **Concrete attention**
Looking at real scenes, not just general ideas or abstractions.
- **Pattern recognition over time**
Seeing what changes, what repeats, and what drifts.
- **Life-affirming noticing**
Finding small signs of movement, care, curiosity, or relief.
- **Tiny, realistic action**
Turning reflection into 10-minute steps rather than huge plans.
- **Gentle awareness of defences and biases**
Seeing how your mind protects you and where it trips you up, without attacking yourself.
- **Media awareness**

Understanding how audio, video, and text each shape what you notice and say.

- **Ethical sense and boundaries**

Honouring your own privacy and other people's.

- **Archiving and naming**

Treating your entries as a growing body of work, not random scraps.

- **Craft skills**

Slowly improving sound, light, pacing, and editing.

- **Weaving**

Linking entries together so they add up to something over weeks, months, and years.

What you get in the short term

- A calmer, clearer sense of what you just said or wrote.
- One or two concrete things to remember from today's entry.
- A small, realistic action that does not overwhelm you.
- A sense that you are doing something structured, not just venting.

What you get in the long term

- A searchable archive of your own thinking and living.
- A clearer feel for your patterns: what pulls you down, what lifts you.
- Stronger self-knowledge and more grounded confidence.
- A healthier relationship with phones, cameras, and platforms: devices serving you, not the other way round.
- A practice you can adapt, teach, or share with others, if you wish.

How to use this worksheet

- Use it **after** a CST entry — whether that is:
 - an audio note
 - a video diary
 - or a written/text entry
- Aim for **a few minutes**, not an hour.
- Keep it **short, honest, and workable**, not perfect.
- You do not have to fill in every section every time.

Think of this as a small pass across your entry, not an exam.
- Over time, the accumulation matters more than any single page.

1) Quick check-in (30–60 seconds)

Why this matters

Before working with meaning, notice your body and basic state. This helps you spot when you are edging towards overload, so you can pause instead of pushing through and regretting it later.

Body

- Body: ☐ tense ☐ neutral ☐ loose
- Breath: ☐ shallow ☐ steady

Scales (0–5)

- Mood (0–5): _____
- Energy (0–5): _____
- Attention (0–5): _____

If everything feels spiky, heavy, or spinning:

- Pause the worksheet.
- Ground yourself (stand up, breathe, or move).
- Use any safety contacts or support you already have.

Notes (optional):

2) One-minute distillation

Why this matters

Entries can be messy, repetitive, and wandering. That is fine. This step teaches you to pull out the signal without shaming the noise. You are practising talking about your own experience in plain, working language.

Three sentences that capture the entry

Working title (plain words, no poetry required)

One-line takeaway (for future-you)

A short line you would like future-you to see first:

3) Concrete over abstract

Why this matters

CST leans on lived scenes more than abstract theory. Concrete detail keeps things grounded in everyday life. Rather than floating off into generalisations, you anchor meaning in specific times, spaces, and relationships.

List 3 concrete moments (sensory or situational)

If you mostly theorised or talked in generalities, add one concrete example now:

Over time, notice what kinds of scenes keep returning: work, family, late-night scrolling, walks, small joys, conflicts, quiet routines. That is useful information.

4) What changed?

Why this matters

CST is cumulative. Each entry sits next to the ones that came before. You are tracking shifts in attention, interpretation, and direction rather than waiting for dramatic breakthroughs.

Compared with your previous entry, what has shifted in:

Attention (what you noticed)

Interpretation (what it meant to you)

Direction (what you will do, even in tiny form)

You are training yourself to see small drift over time, not just big moments.

5) Life-affirming detail

Why this matters

CST is not forced positivity. It does, however, look for what is life-affirming, even when the material is rough. You are noticing small signs of movement, care, humour, curiosity, or relief that open some space in the story.

One detail that feels enlivening or opens space

Why this matters (one sentence)

Life-affirming does not have to mean cheerful. It might be:

- you set a boundary
 - you noticed fatigue earlier than usual
 - you let yourself rest
 - you asked for help
 - you laughed once, even briefly
-

6) Tiny next step (≤ 10 minutes)

Why this matters

Without action, entries risk becoming an archive of stuckness. Tiny actions, kept deliberately small, prevent overwhelm and build a sense of agency. Ten minutes or less keeps things reachable.

Action seed (≤ 10 minutes)

Something you can realistically do within 10 minutes:

When / where (concrete)

Friction you anticipate + nudge you will use

Examples of friction: low energy, fear of judgement, getting sucked into your phone.

Examples of nudges: set a timer, put the phone in another room, start with 2 minutes not 10.

You are not aiming for perfection, just a slow bias towards doing *something* rather than nothing.

7) Defences, coping, and biases

Notice and steer, not pathologise

Why this matters

Psychological defences, coping strategies, and cognitive biases are part of being human. Instead of labelling yourself, you are learning to notice how these show up in your entries, how they protect you, and where they get in the way.

Today I spotted (tick any that fit)

Defences

- ☐ intellectualising
- ☐ minimising
- ☐ rationalising

- ☐ projection
- ☐ dissociation

Net effect this time:

- ☐ helpful
- ☐ unhelpful
- ☐ mixed

Adjustment next time (one line)

Coping (what you actually used around this entry)

- ☐ walk 5–10 mins
- ☐ tea / water
- ☐ breath work
- ☐ humour
- ☐ music
- ☐ called / messaged someone

Keep or retire today?

What still helps, and what is starting to wear thin?

Biases (how thinking might have been skewed)

- ☐ confirmation (only noticing what fits the story already in your head)
- ☐ catastrophising (jumping to the worst-case scenario)
- ☐ hindsight (telling yourself you 'should have known')
- ☐ fundamental attribution (blaming character rather than situation)

Counter-move you applied (or could apply next time, one line)

Stay curious, not harsh. Sometimes a defence keeps you safe enough to speak at all. The aim is flexibility, not self-attack.

8) Media ecology check

The medium is doing work

Why this matters

Different media highlight and hide different parts of experience. Audio catches tone; video brings in gesture and environment; text gives precision and structure. CST treats these not as neutral containers but as active parts of the process.

Recorded as

- ☐ audio
- ☐ video
- ☐ text

What did this medium amplify?

What did this medium mute or blur?

If you switched medium, what might you learn?

Over time, notice which medium you reach for in which states. That choice is a form of self-talk.

9) Ethics, consent, privacy

Why this matters

Even in a DIY, non-clinical practice, ethics, consent, and privacy matter. You are dealing with real people, including yourself. This section keeps clear boundaries around what gets shared, with whom, and in what form.

Anyone else identifiable in this entry?

- ☐ no
- ☐ yes → consent
- ☐ obtained
- ☐ not obtained (if not, keep private)

Identifiers to redact (names, faces, places, specific details)

Alt-text / caption if sharing a visual

Include a non-clinical disclaimer if posting publicly:

- ☐ added

Err on the side of care. You can always share more later; you cannot unshare.

10) Archive cleanly

So future-you can find it

Why this matters

A usable archive is central to CST. You are not just expressing: you are building a body of work. Clean filenames and cross-links make long-term reflection possible.

Filename format

YYYY-MM-DD_HHMM_[audio|video|text]_[3-word-title]

Actual filename used

Version

Use v1.0 for the first saved version; bump when you meaningfully edit.

v_____

Location (folder / app / link)

Cross-links (2 related entries)

☐

☐

2.

Over time, your archive becomes a map of your life and thinking. Give it just enough structure that you can actually use it.

11) Publish, park, or private?

Why this matters

Not every entry belongs in public. Deciding on visibility is part of the craft. You can keep material private, schedule it for later, or share now. This helps you avoid impulsive posting and also avoid hiding everything.

Visibility today

- ☐ private archive
- ☐ share later
- ☐ publish now

If publishing:

Platform(s)

- ☐ site (jaseanton.com)
- ☐ YouTube
- ☐ podcast
- ☐ Medium
- ☐ other: _____

Excerpt (≤ 140 characters)

A short, honest line to represent the piece.

CTA (gentle, if any)

(e.g. invite reflection, not sales)

Category / series / canonical set

Keep it aligned with the practice: short, regular, life-affirming, DIY. Devices serve you, not the other way round.

12) Craft notes

Make the next one smoother

Why this matters

You are not only working on content; you are also working on craft. Small technical adjustments add up, helping you focus more on substance and less on avoidable friction.

Pacing

Too fast / too slow / just right?

Audio (level, room tone, mic distance)

Video (framing, light, movement)

Editing (length, cuts, title card, subtitles / alt-text)

One improvement for next time

Treat this as slow training. Over months and years, the craft will quietly serve the practice.

13) Weekly weave hooks

Set yourself up for pattern-spotting

Why this matters

CST is cumulative. Weekly or periodic reviews become easier if each entry drops a small hook into the weave: where it belongs, what threads it continues, what evidence is building up.

This entry adds to threads

Evidence I am accumulating (titles or tags)

Candidate for a Weekly Weave reflection?

☐ yes (why):

This creates continuity. You are not starting from scratch each time; you are extending lines of thought.

14) Gentle close-down

Why this matters

Ending matters as much as beginning. A gentle close-down helps your nervous system move out of active reflection and back into the rest of your day, rather than leaving you buzzing or raw.

One sentence of gratitude or grace for today

Deliberate ending (choose one)

- ☐ stand and stretch
- ☐ brief walk
- ☐ kettle on
- ☐ tidy desk

Return plan (next realistic slot)

- ☐ morning
- ☐ afternoon
- ☐ evening

About ____ mins

Keep endings simple and repeatable. You are signalling that this is a contained practice, not an endless spiral.

15) One-page wrap (tear-off)

A compact summary you can glance at later, or use for reflection or planning.

Title

Takeaway

Action (≤ 10 minutes)

Visibility

- ☐ private
- ☐ later
- ☐ publish

→ **Excerpt**

Defence / bias spotted

→ **Adjustment**

Cross-link(s)

Version

V_____

Where saved

Notes

Keep it short. Keep it regular. What you are doing will add up to something.

Re-key when stuck (Goffman): change the as-if and see what opens.

Media shapes meaning: rotate modes occasionally (audio, video, text) to learn new things.

This is personal practice, not therapy or medical advice.

If you are struggling, reach out to appropriate support in your area.

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